

ELDRITCH

LAYLINE



STORY AND ART BY
SHAWNA NASH GARRITY

Say hello to Mapleview University.



This century-old school is known for its outstanding student programs as well as its scenic grounds.

It's a great place to be a student. And there are quite a lot of us.

GK 00

There's also one werewolf.

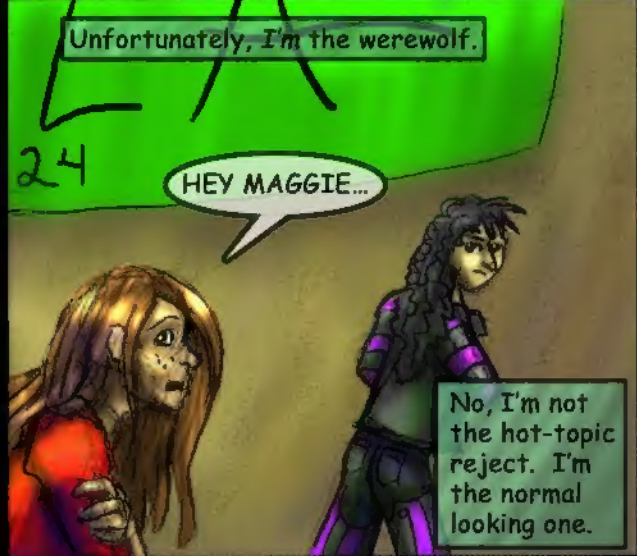


WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

Unfortunately, I'm the werewolf.

24

HEY MAGGIE...



No, I'm not the hot-topic reject. I'm the normal looking one.

LOOK, I... I'M NEW TO ALL OF THIS STUFF.

AND I WAS KIND OF A BITCH TO YOU THE OTHER NIGHT.

I'M... SORRY.



NO WORRIES!



IN FACT, I KNOW JUST WHERE A NEWBIE LIKE YOU NEEDS TO GO!

HEY!

So, of course the place wasn't on campus. It's, well... it's across the river and through the woods in downtown Maplevue.

Turns out it's a weird little place... kind of a hippietown, really. Lots privately owned cafés, galleries, and shops --like this "John's Toys" place. How anything in this area was supposed to be "just the thing I needed" was beyond me.



Hooray.

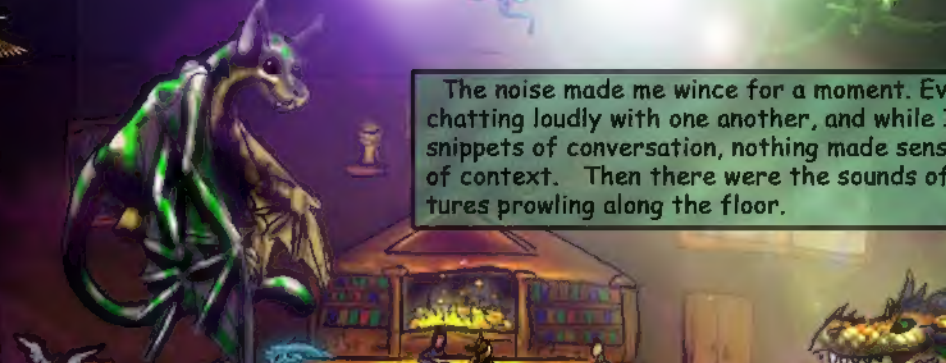


I considered holding my breath. Obviously, the town's hippie fumes had gotten to Maggie.



DON'T BE SUCH A WUSS, IT'S ONLY GLAM-OUR-ED. ER, BY THAT, I MEAN IT'S DIS-GUISED BY FAERIE MAGIC. UM, LET ME EXPLAIN. THE ENCHANTMENT IS DESIGNED TO APPEAR AS SOMETHING UNMEMORABLE OR REPULSIVE TO WHOMEVER LOOKS UPON IT... IT USUALLY KEEPS PEOPLE FROM WANTING TO WANDER IN, OR DISCUSS IT. THE APPEARANCE WILL EVEN CHANGE AS YOUR INTERESTS DO, TO ENSURE IT'S NEVER OF NOTICE TO YOU. WELL, WHAT I MEAN IS, IT'S NOT REALLY A PORN SHOP, FAITH. THE SPELL JUST MAKES YOU THINK IT IS. OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...





The noise made me wince for a moment. Everyone was chatting loudly with one another, and while I caught snippets of conversation, nothing made sense to me out of context. Then there were the sounds of the creatures prowling along the floor.

It was like all of the monsters from every bad Harry Potter fanfic out there had converged into one place. Some were talking in strange voices, while others were roaring and squawking. And on top of this was the strong-beated music performed by a group even less likely than the Bremen Town Musicians.

Then there was the smell! For a moment, the intensity of the odor made me light-headed. I'd been in a club before, but I didn't remember the scent of alcohol being so strong! And then there was this end-of-the-day petSMART funk... the smell of too many animals crammed too close together. However, not all of the smells were unpleasant. There was the warm, comforting scent of hickory wood smoke, and instead of a club or bar's usual cigarette rank, the air was thick with the smell of various incenses and heated tree resin. Regardless...

Beam me up, Scotty, things are too weird down here.







HEY, I KNOW YOU!



YOU... YOU DO?

OH SURE, I'M PART OF THE GAMING GUILD AT M.U. WE PLAY D&D ALONG THE HALLWAY IN THE ART BUILDING, SO I SEE YOU WALK THROUGH. THOUGH, MY TWO BUDDIES AND I ARE KIND OF SKIPPING A GAME SO WE CAN HANG HERE.

ISN'T DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ABOUT MAGIC AND STUFF?

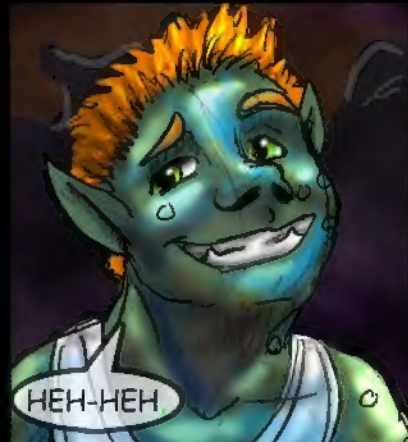
OH YEAH, IT'S GREAT!

BUT YOU'RE... YOU'RE AN OGR--

SO? I PLAY A HALF-ELF ROGUE. IT'S STILL FANTASY.



HUH... I'D NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY...



HEH-HEH



LOOKS LIKE THE WELCOMING PARTY IS HERE. YOU'D BETTER GO WITH HIM.



UH, OKAY...?

I looked for Maggie as I followed, but couldn't see or even hear her. Instead, I heard words I didn't recognize... like angha, and gulon, and the occasional, unfamiliar cry of one of the animals around me.

But then, when I passed the two griffon carvings guarding the upper level... Somehow the noise of the lower level became muffled. Thank God.

WELL, MR. VON WAU WAU, IT WAS GREAT SEEING YOU, AND PLEASE GIVE MY THANKS TO MIKE AND SPIDER.

...FAITH?

DYLAN?

OH, SPIRITS--

IT'S BEEN AGES, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE--

...UM, DYLAN?

WHAT THE SNOT IS THIS GLOWIE THING?

OH, IT'S ME! SEAMOUS CALLS IT AN ASTRAL PROJECTION OF MY SUBCONSCIOUS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. YOU SEE, I'M A COYOTE SPIRIT...

OR, WELL, I WILL BE ONE DAY. I'M WORKING ON IT. THIS IS GOOD PRACTICE THOUGH, RIGHT? WHAT BETTER PLACE TO FIND PEOPLE WHO NEED GUIDANCE THAN A BAR?

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE OF THE ELDRITCH SORT?

I'M NOT AN ELDRITCH, DYLAN, I'M A FREAKING WEREWOLF.

NO, NO, I MEAN, WE'RE ALL ELDRITCH. IT MEANS STRANGE, OTHERWORLDLY. IT'S THE TERM WE USE TO DISCRIBE OURSELVES.

--WHETHER WE'RE WITCHES, MONSTERS, FAE, VAMPIRES, SPIRITS, WHATEVER. HM. SINCE YOU'RE A WEREWOLF, I BET THAT YOU'RE AN ALT? A LOT OF WERE-WOLVES ARE.

WHAT THE CRAP IS AN ALT? I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF THAT...

OH, WHEN IT COMES TO US, WE USUALLY USE ONE OF THREE TERMS TO DESCRIBE HOW WE BECAME ELDRITCH. THERE ARE ALTS, NATURALS, AND CALLED. TAKE ME, FOR EXAMPLE: MY ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND I DIDN'T KNOW IT, BUT BOTH OF MY BIRTH PARENTS WERE LIKE ME. I'M OF A MORE PURE-BLOODED SORT, SO THAT MAKES ME A NATURAL.

ARE... ARE THERE LOTS OF, ER, NATURAL MONSTERS ABOUT?

ALTS ARE ALTERED HUMANS, PEOPLE WHO WERE TOUCHED BY MAGIC. MAGES AND MANCERS, VAMPIRES, WERECREATURES, MERROWS... ALL OF THE CONTAGIOUS SORTS OF THINGS, THOSE ARE ALTS.

ONLY SPECIES WHO ARE SUPER SMART, GOOD AT HIDING, OR CAN DISGUISE THEMSELVES WELL TEND TO BE NATURALS. SASQUATCH, SPIRITS, FAYELINGS AND SUCH. NOW YOU, YOU'RE PROBABLY DIFFERENT. IF YOU'RE THE KIND OF WEREWOLF THAT WAS BITTEN, YOU'RE AN ALT.

OKAY, SO
WHAT ABOUT THE LAST
KIND? CALLED?

OH, THE CALLED

--ARE CREATURES HAR-
BORING DORMANT GENES
OF THE ELDRITCH SORT,
WHICH MANIFEST IF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL
CONDITIONS ARE CON-
DUSIVE TO THEIR DEVEL-
OPMENT WITHIN THE
BEING'S PHYNOTYPE.

MIND RUNNING THAT BY
ME AGAIN, NEW GUY?

A LITTLE
MORE SLOWLY
THIS TIME?

Dang, this guy
looks familiar... but
I can't remember
where I've bumped
into him before.

YOU MAY CALL
ME SEAMUS.

HM. I KNOW YOU'RE A COLLEGE
STUDENT... THUS, I PRESUME YOU
HAVE HAD BASIC BIOLOGY. SO,
TELL ME, DO YOU KNOW ANY-
THING ABOUT DOMINANT AND
RECESSIVE GENES?

OH, UM... WHEN
SOMEONE GETS A RECES-
SIVE GENE FROM ONE
PARENT, AND A DOMI-
NANT GENE FROM THE
OTHER, THE DOMINANT
GENE WILL SHOW IN A
PERSON'S PHYSICAL
APPEARANCE...



BUT IF THERE
ARE TWO RECES-
SIVE GENES, THE
RECESSIVE TRAIT
WILL SHOW UP
INSTEAD?

CLOSE
ENOUGH. BUT
NOW, WHEN
YOU GET THE
ELDRITCH FOLK
INVOLVED, IT
BECOMES A
LITTLE LESS
CLEAR-CUT.

HM.
HOW TO
PUT THIS
SIMPLY?

WELL, SHOULD A BEING OF THE ELDRITCH SORT ENGAGE IN FORNICATION WITH A HUMAN OR ANIMAL, THE GENETIC MAKEUP OF THE ELDRITCH PARENT WILL INTEGRATE ITSELF WITH THAT OF IT'S OFFSPRING, TAGGING ALONG AND BEHAVING LIKE A RECESSIVE TRAIT THOUGH, ELDRITCH GENES DO NOT BEHAVE ENTIERLY LIKE MUNDANE ONES, YOU SEE A GENETICIST MAY OVERLOOK SUCH THINGS, THINKING THE STRANGE DNA COULD BE A RETROVIRAL ADDITION, OR EVEN PART OF A TELOMERE. HOWEVER, SHOULD THAT OFFSPRING THEN MATE WITH ANOTHER OF THE ELDRITCH SORT, OR ANOTHER OF ITS KIND HARBORING SIMILAR ELDRITCH, RECESSIVE TRAITS, THEY COULD MANIFEST IN THE OFFSPRING'S PHENOTYPE, SOMETIME AFTER PHYSICAL MATURITY. THAT IS OF COURSE, ONLY IF THE CORRECT CONDITIONS ARE MET.

WAIT... SO, THERE ARE MONSTERS THAT HIDE WELL. I GET THAT. AND THERE ARE HUMANS THAT GET TURNED INTO MAGICAL THINGS. I GET THAT TOO. BUT YOU ALSO MEAN TO SAY THAT HUMANS AND ANIMALS MAY JUST HAPPEN TO BE GENETICALLY DOOMED TO BECOME ALL KINDS OF MONSTERS? I DON'T GET HOW THAT CAN HAPPEN. I MEAN, I WOULDN'T JUST UP AND MATE WITH A GRIFFIN OR SOMETHING, THAT'S JUST... JUST...





WELL, IT WAS RARELY THAT DIRECT, AND TOOK A LONG TIME FOR GENETICS SUCH AS THOSE OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF GRIFFINS, GRYPHENS, GRIFFONS, ETC. TO REACH HUMANS.

PERHAPS I SHOULD REITERATE WITH MORE DETAIL...

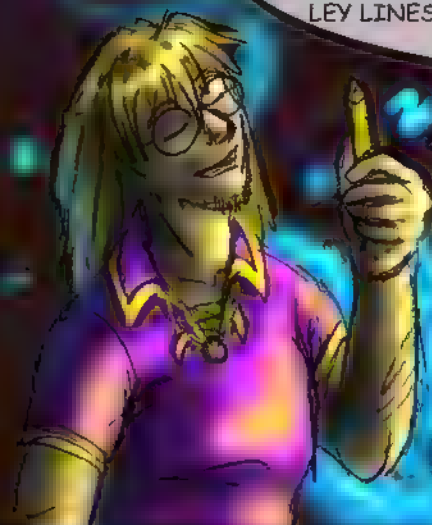
LOOK AT IT LIKE THIS: A GRIFFIN IS COMPATABLE WITH BOTH MUNDANE AND ELDITCH FELINES, LIKE LEOPARDS, MAN-TACORES, AND NEMIAN LIONS. IF THE MOTHER OF A MIXED BROOD IS OF A MUNDANE SPECIES, THE OFFSPRING WILL ALMOST ALWAYS APPEAR MUNDANE AT BIRTH (HOWEVER, AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, THE ELDITCH TRAITS MAY APPEAR AFTER PHYSICAL MATURITY), WHILE IN ELDITCH COUPLES THE RESULTING OFFSPRING FREQUENTLY APPEAR AS EITHER ONE PARENT OR THE OTHER. THOUGH, WHILE THE YOUNG WILL STILL MOST OFTEN TAKE AFTER THE MOTHER, HYBRIDS ARE NOT UNCOMMON EITHER.

HOWEVER, NEMIAN LIONS, LIKE MANY ELDITCH SPECIES, HAVE THE ABILITY TO SHAPESHIFT. IN THE NEMEAN LION'S CASE, THEY CAN CHANGE INTO A HUMAN OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER. THUS, A NEMIAN LION HARBORING RECESSIVE GRIFFIN GENES COULD CHANGE INTO A HUMAN, COPULATE, AND HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO PASS GRIFFON AND NEMIAN LION GENES ONTO HUMAN CHILDREN. THEN, AS WE DISCUSSED EARLIER, SHOULD TWO HUMANS CARRYING SIMILAR RESSITIVE GENE SETS MATE... THE RESULTING CHILD YOU END UP WITH COULD DEVELOP INTO ONE OF THE CALLED...

FURTHERMORE, SOME OF THE HYBRIDIZED YOUNG MAY HAVE DEVELOPED THE NEMIAN LION'S ABILITY TO SHAPESHIFT. THEY MAY THEN MATE WITH GRIFFONS, ADDING SOME OF THEIR HYBRIDIZED TRAITS INTO THE GRIFFIN GENE POOL. THUS, OTHER SPECIES COULD INHERIT THE ABILITY TO CHANGE THEIR SHAPES, AND BECOME COMPATABLE WITH ADDITIONAL CREATURES. THUS, MORE AND MORE...

OKAY, I'M STILL NOT SURE I REALLY UNDERSTAND ALL OF THIS BUT I DON'T GET WHY THY'RE REFERRED TO AS "CALLED."

OH! WELL, SEE, CALLED NEED THE RIGHT KIND OF ENVIROMMENT AND ENERGIES FOR THEIR DORMANT TRANSFORMATION TO COME TO FRUITION. CALLED ARE INSTINCTIVELY DRIVEN TO SEEK OUT A LOCATION OR SETTING THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO THIS CHANGE. FURTHERMORE, I AM ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THEY ARE DRAWN THE LEY LINES OF SPECIFIC DIMENTIONAL FREQUENCIES YOU SEE...



LEY LINES ARE KIND OF LIKE INTRA-DIMET-NIONAL, DIFFICULT TO SENSE RIVERS OF MAGICAL RADIATION THAT CRISS CROSS THE AIR, SEA AND EARTH. THESE LEY LINES SEEP ENERGY, POSSIBLY THE MAGICAL ENERGY CALLED NEED.

BUT I DIGRESS, THIS USUALLY LEADS TO WHAT PARENTS CALL "PHASES" A YOUNG ADULT MAY DECIDE THEY NEED TO GO SKY DIVING, VISIT SACRED SITES IN OTHER COUNTRIES, SIMPLY NEED TO GO CAMPING OUT IN THE WILDERNESS, SEE THE OCEAN OR ANY OTHER NUMBER OF THINGS WHEN THEY'D NOT SHOWN ANY PRIOR INTEREST.



IN THEIR ADAMANCY, THEIR INSTINCTUAL NEED TO DO THESE THINGS, THEY MAY ACT IRRATIONALLY, BE OVERLY EMOTIONAL, OR OTHERWISE SIMPLY BE DIFFICULT FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO UNDERSTAND.



IN SHORT, THEY ARE CALLED TO PLACES THAT WILL HELP THEM DEVELOP AS ONE OF THE ELDRITCH FOLK.



MANY CALLED WILL GET INKLINGS OF WHAT THEY WILL BECOME, AND A FEW EVEN FIGURE IT OUT BEFOREHAND. SOME OF THESE INDIVIDUALS PURSUE PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING... OTHERS SEEK UNDERSTANDING ON INTERNET FORUMS, AND MANY EVENTUALLY BEGIN TO IGNORE IT...

I think I only caught half of that. I wonder how long he'd go if I just didn't say anything. heck, at the rate he's going, I wonder if this guy even needs to breathe? .. Maybe I better not encourage that.. I'll have to look up enough of this weird mumbo-jumbo later as is ..

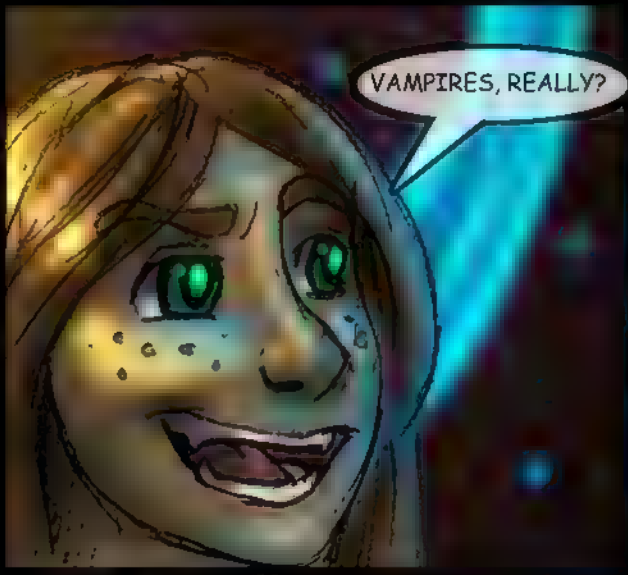




SO, ALL OF THE MYTHS ARE TRUE?

WELL, TO A POINT. HUMANS GOT SOME DETAILS CORRECT IN THEIR STORIES, BUT OTHER THINGS... WELL, THEY DIDN'T. YOU SEE--

BUT THINGS LIKE FAIRIES, BIGFOOT, UNICORNS AND ZOMBIES... THEY ALL EXIST?



VAMPIRES, REALLY?

DON'T WORRY THOUGH, FAITH, YOU'LL NEVER SEE A VAMPIRE HERE. OR A SASQUATCH FOR THAT MATTER. THEY KEEP TO THEMSELVES, AND STICK TO PLACES THEY FEEL ARE SPIRITUAL, LIKE PINE NATIONAL FOREST, OR THE UNITAH MOUNTAINS.

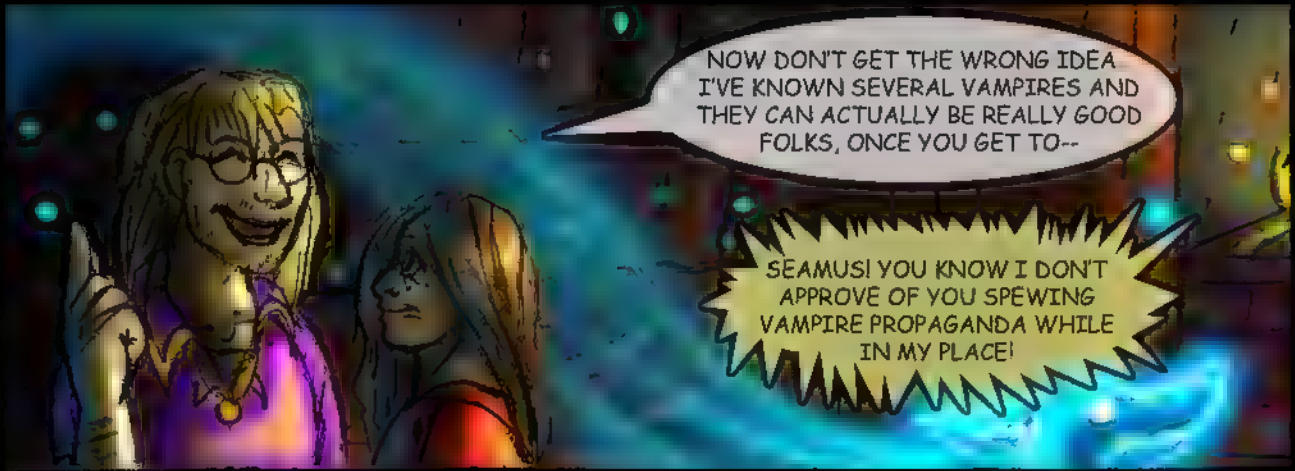


WELL, MOVIE ZOMBIES DON'T EXIST, THAT'S JUST PREPOSTEROUS. ZOMBIES WERE JUST PEOPLE UNDER THE EFFECT OF A DRUG COCKTAIL BREWED BY VODUN PRACTITIONERS. AS FOR WIZARDS, THEY WENT THE WAY OF THE BONNACON AND CALADRIUS, I'M AFRAID. THEY'RE LOST TO US FOREVER. ALL THAT REMAINS OF THEM IS THEIR LEGACY, WHICH CONSISTS OF THEIR GREATEST SUCCESSES, BUT ALSO THEIR GREATEST FAILURES. THEY CREATED THE MANCERS, MAGES, AND VAMPIRES THROUGH THE USE AND MISUSE OF THEIR ABILITIES.

(C)SMG 10 Nashoba Hosting

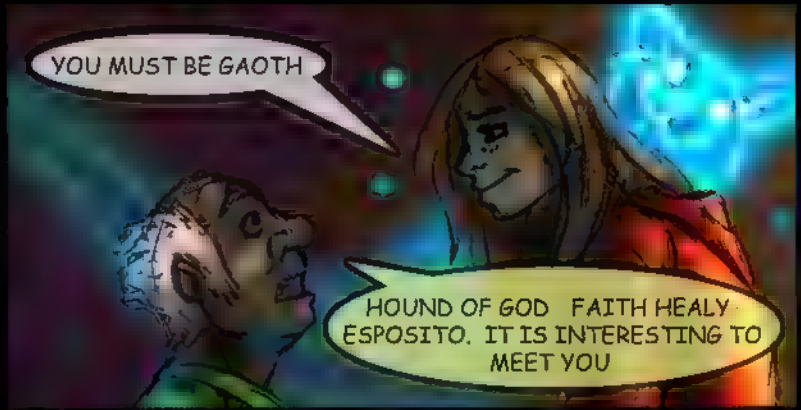
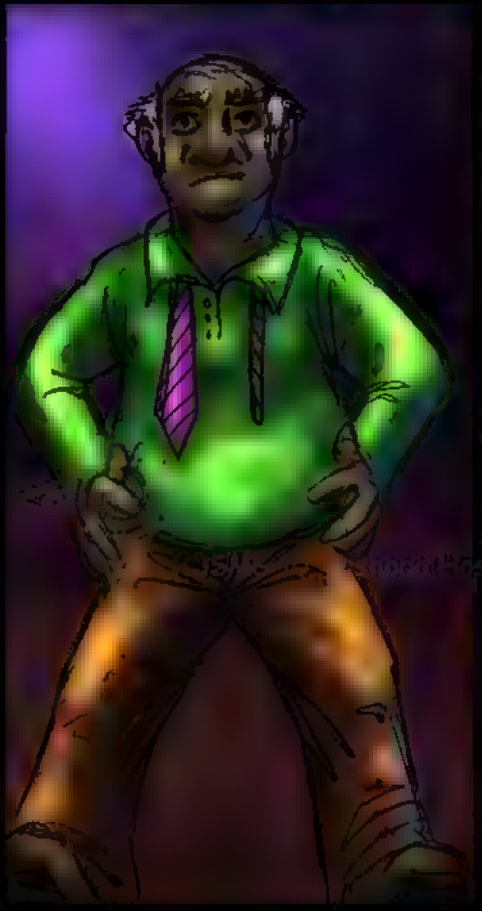


BUT ANYWAY, VAMPIRES... WELL, THE FAE AND VAMPIRES HATE EACH OTHER, AND ALWAYS HAVE. AND THIS PLACE IS FAE OWNED. THE LOCAL OBERON, GAOTH, IS NICER THAN MOST TOWARD THE BLOOD-SUCKERS, BUT, WELL...



NOW DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA
I'VE KNOWN SEVERAL VAMPIRES AND
THEY CAN ACTUALLY BE REALLY GOOD
FOLKS, ONCE YOU GET TO--

SEAMUS! YOU KNOW I DON'T
APPROVE OF YOU SPEWING
VAMPIRE PROPAGANDA WHILE
IN MY PLACE!



YOU MUST BE GAOTH

HOUND OF GOD FAITH HEALY
ESPOSITO. IT IS INTERESTING TO
MEET YOU



.. HOW DO YOU
KNOW MY NAME?

HOW DO YOU
KNOW MINE?

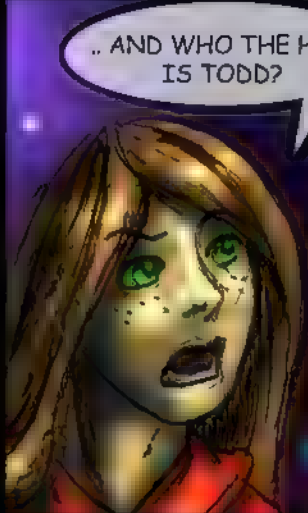


JAY-ZUES CRACKERS!

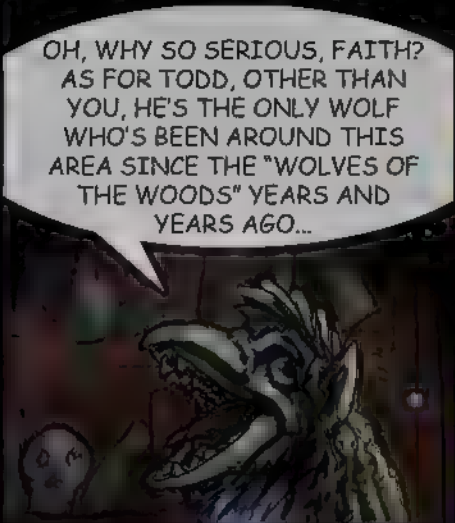
I could have sworn last
time I saw her she
looked different this
place must be messing
with my head.

LOOKIT, ALL OF THE
COOL PEOPLE ARE HERE!
WELL, EXCEPT FOR
TODD

MAGGIE, STOP
SCARING ME!

A close-up of Faith, a young woman with long brown hair and freckles, wearing a red shirt. She has a surprised expression with wide eyes and an open mouth.

.. AND WHO THE HECK IS TODD?

A wolf's head is visible in the background, looking towards the left. The scene is dimly lit with some blue light sources.

OH, WHY SO SERIOUS, FAITH? AS FOR TODD, OTHER THAN YOU, HE'S THE ONLY WOLF WHO'S BEEN AROUND THIS AREA SINCE THE "WOLVES OF THE WOODS" YEARS AND YEARS AGO...

Faith is shown from the waist up, looking surprised. A wolf's head is visible on the right side of the panel.

OH REALLY?

Faith is standing next to a large, grey, shaggy wolf. The wolf has a purple and yellow striped collar. Faith is looking at the wolf with a serious expression.

TODD IS MY RIGHT-HAND WOLF, FAITH. HE HELPS ME KEEP TRACK OF WHO COMES AND GOES IN THIS TERRITORY, LETS ME KNOW IF THE BLOODSUCKERS ARE NOSING ABOUT TOO CLOSE TO THE BORDERS.

A young man with dark hair, wearing a grey shirt, is standing and looking towards the left. He has a slight smile.

I'M SURE HE'LL BE VEEERY INTERESTED IN MEETING YOU...

Faith is standing with her arms crossed, looking serious. A blue, ethereal light is visible in the background.

MEETING ME? IF HE'S THE ONLY OTHER WOLF AROUND, I THINK HE ALREADY HAS.

A large, dark wolf with glowing orange eyes is looking towards the right. Faith's face is visible in the bottom right corner, looking surprised.

OH I HAVE, HAVE I?

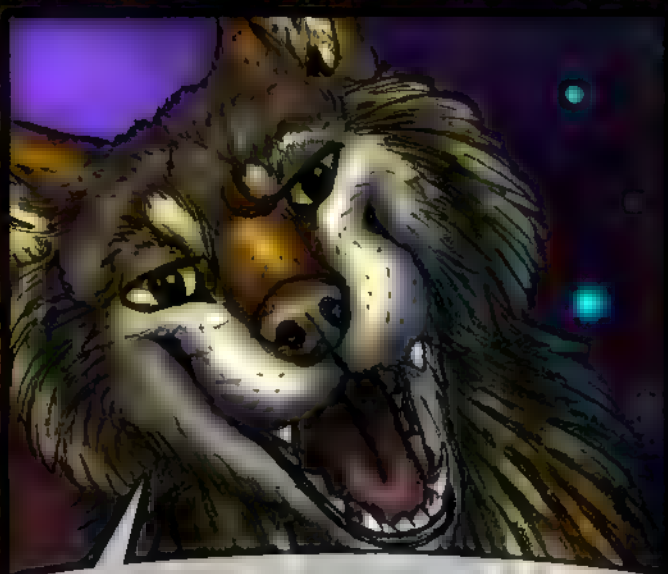


RRRRRrrrrrr.
HELLOOO, RED.
MARCHES-VOUS LE
CHEMIN DES GOUPIL-
LES, OU LA CHEMIN
DES AIGUILLES?

UH, YOU'RE



NOT WHO I EXPECTED



OH, REALLY? THEN ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE
MYSELF. I'M TODD --JUST YOURRR AVERAGE OVER-
SIZED WOLF. FOLKS BACK HOME CALLED ME A
BZOU, NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH A LOUP-GAROU



HEH-HEH, THOUGH THE
CURRENT POLITICALLY
CORRECT TERM FOR MY KIND
IS "MYTHICAL ANIMAL" I
THINK FAIRRRRYTALE WOLF
SUITS ME JUST FINE. RRRrrrr,
NOW, TELL ME, JUST WHO
WERE YOU EXPECTING?

--UH, SO FAITH,
YOU WERE BITTEN
A LITTLE OVER A
MONTH AGO,
CORRECT?

UM .. ACTU-
ALLY, ABOUT
THREE WEEKS
AGO

WAIT! YOU MEAN
TO SAY THAT YOU
WERENT
ASSAULTED ON THE
FULL MOON?



I... NO, IT WAS
ONLY MOSTLY
FULL, I THINK. I
GUESS THAT'S
PART OF WHY IT
NEVER OCCURED
TO ME THAT I
COULD HAVE BEEN
MAULED BY A
WEREWOLF
BEFORE THE
OTHER NIGHT.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
...IS THAT BAD?

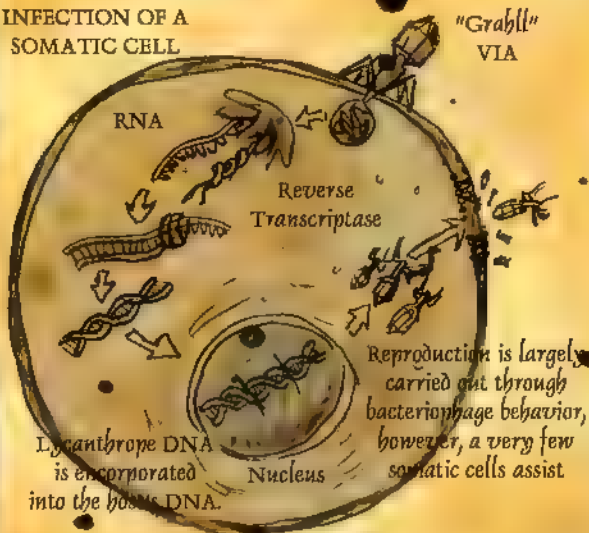
I... I DON'T KNOW YOU SEE, THE MOST COMMON LYCANTHROPE PATHOGEN, THE ONE THAT CREATES "GRAHLL" WEREWOLVES, TAKES A FULL FOUR WEEKS TO RUN ITS FULL COURSE, SO IF THE FOURTH WEEK WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE FULL MOON...

WAIT, HOLD UP, PATHOGEN? I THOUGHT WEREWOLVES ARE CURSED?

STOP INTERRUPTING ME...

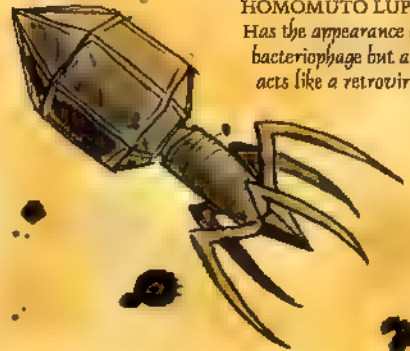
But, to answer your question, no, what happened to you is not a curse, it is transferred via a pathogen unknown to currently widely understood science, a Viral Infections Agent that carries out the lycanthropic conversion. However, the Grahl Werewolf VIA has several odd functions. Most of the VIAs that initially enter the bloodstream will both work and act like bacteriophages, finding foreign bacteria and infecting them in a way different than they would affect most human cells, causing them to create countless replicas of the Grahl Werewolf VIA, as opposed to following the function they carry out with the infected host's somatic cells. This effectively leads to the demise of the disease causing bacteria in the victim's system and prevents infection, while boosting the numbers of Grahl VIA without harming the bite victim.

INFECTION OF A SOMATIC CELL



What is odd about this is that the incorporation of pathogen-based DNA into a cell often results in the creation of more pathogens and the death of the cell, like what occurs when the VIAs act like bacteriophages. However, this is not the case most of the time in Grahl. Depending on the type of somatic cell, the genetic command to make more pathogens is often "turned off" or implemented sparingly, at little damage to the cell. What's really interesting is that when a leukocyte is infected and produces VIAs, the ability to infect human cells is lost in the process, and what results is an odd sort of permanent werewolf bacteriophage, which lacks the ability to infect human cells at all. They float around in the bloodstream and kill bacteria or other foreign cells, in turn making more of themselves while new, lycanthropic white blood cells, enhanced by genetic alteration, take out unwanted viruses...

"GRAHLL PATHOGEN" HOMOMUTO LUPUS- Has the appearance of a bacteriophage but also acts like a retrovirus.



However, the VIA's RNA is not nearly as simple as most others, and the pathogen's behavior is remarkably complex. Thus, I don't yet know what triggers some of the pathogen's reactions, but will with further study. Regardless, after most foreign and non-symbiotic bacteria have been eliminated from the person's tissues and bloodstream, the VIA turns toward the host's cells. Following a process used by retroviruses, the VIA has the ability to inject lycanthropic RNA, as well as an enzyme called Reverse Transcriptase into the victim's cells. The enzyme uses the RNA as a template, makes Grahl DNA from the RNA. Then, the host cell immediately takes up the stray DNA and incorporates it into its own, slowly converting human cells into lycanthropic cells through genetic manipulation. This is most prominent near the bite wound, where the initial concentration of VIAs is thickest. This conversion of human cells to lycanthropic cells helps speed up the healing process for the wound.

REPRODUCTION VIA BACTERIA:



OKAY, OKAY, STOP WITH THE TORTURE!

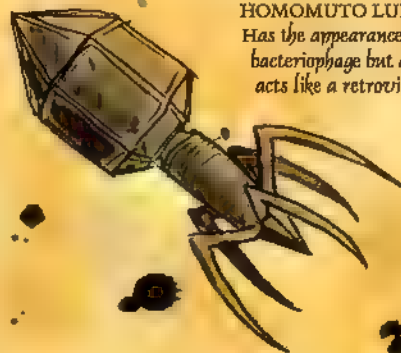
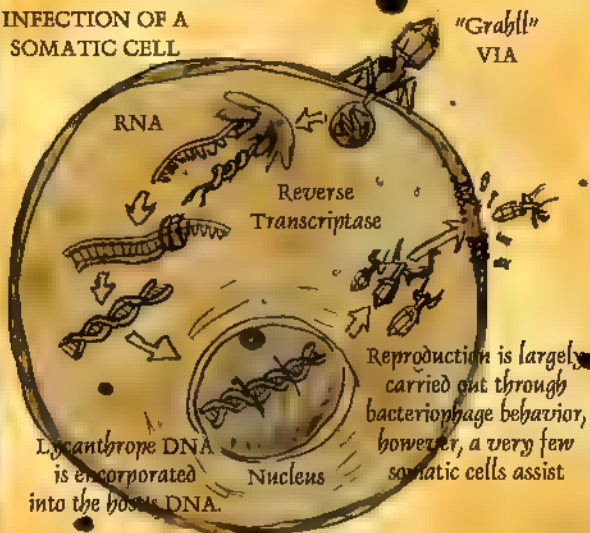
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REPRODUCTION VIA BACTERIA:



OKAY, OKAY, STOP WITH THE TORTURE!

JEEZE, I'M SORRY I ASKED. BUT SERIOUSLY, WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS BAD THAT I WAS BITTEN ON A NIGHT OTHER THAN THE FULL MOON?

I'M SORRY, I GET CARRIED AWAY...

ANYWAY, YOU SEE, IN THE FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS, THE PATHOGEN INCUBATES, LETTING THE HOST HEAL. IN THE THIRD WEEK, THE PATHOGEN GETS TO WORK, CHANGING THE HOST INTO A WEREWOLF. AND THE FOURTH WEEK IS WHEN THE HOST'S "WOLF PERSONALITY" DEVELOPS AND INDEGRATES WITH THE HUMAN SELF.

IT SMOOTHES THE TRANSITION, AND INSURES THAT THE HOST HAS THE PROPER INSTINCTUAL KNOWLEDGE TO BEHAVE SUITABLY AS A WEREWOLF...

IT HELPS ENSURE THE HOST'S SURVIVAL.

SINCE THE FULL MOON INTERRUPTED YOUR DEVELOPMENT, AND CAUSED THE PHYSICAL CHANGES TOO SOON, IT MAY HAVE SLOWED OR DAMAGED THE PROCESS...

HOLD UP. SO, I'M INFECTED WITH SOME STUPID WOLF DISEASE THAT MAKES ME A GRAHLL OR LYCANTHROPE OR WHATEVER... BUT IN ADDITION TO THAT, SINCE I DIDN'T HAVE A FULL MONTH TO DEVELOP, YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT I'M NOT JUST A WEREWOLF...

BUT AN EFFING RETARDED WEREWOLF?

WELL, YOU DID ACT KIND OF STUPID...

SHUT UP, MAGGIE!

WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS THAT I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS WILL AFFECT YOU. HOW DID YOU FARE YOUR FIRST MOON? WERE YOU ABLE TO WALK PROPERLY? I'M SURE WHOMEVER BIT YOU HELPED YOU OUT...

I DON'T KNOW WHO BIT ME, AND HE SURE DIDN'T HELP ANY. THE SONNOVABITCH RAN OFF.

SHE'S RIGHT. NO ONE ANSWERED HER HOWL.

HOWL, WHAT DO YOU MEAN--?

WAIT, A GRAHLL WEREWOLF WITH NO PACK? SUCH INDIVIDUALS DON'T LAST LONG.

TRAINING

GUIDANCE

AND FRIENDSHIP

THIS GIRL WILL NEED EDUCATION

YOU ALL KNOW THE RULE: NEWCOMERS ARE EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY. AND I WOULD BE DISSAPOINTED IF WE HAD TO SEND HER TO ELKHORN, OR AS A LAST RESORT, CAMP HERO BECAUSE WE COULDN'T HELP HER ENOUGH. YOU FOUR WILL HELP FAITH LEARN WHAT SHE NEEDS TO KNOW TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL LONE WEREWOLF. TODD, YOU WILL BE IN CHARGE OF PRACTICAL, HANDS-ON TRAINING--

RRRRrrrr, I LOOOOOVE HANDS-ON.

SEAMUS, YOU WILL BE IN CHARGE OF EDUCATING FAITH IN...

...SEAMUS?

OH NO, NOT AGAIN...

SEAMUS?

GAOTH, I...

SEAMUS MUST HAVE NEEDED TO GO. REGARDLESS, FAITH, AFTER YOUR MUNDANE LESSONS, YOU ARE TO COME HERE AND

HEY, HEY HEEEEEY, HOLD UP THERE. I NEVER AGREED TO ANY OF THIS CRAZY STUFF, AND I DON'T NEED SOME GUY I DON'T KNOW BOSSING ME AROUND.

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, NOW THAT I KNOW WHAT I AM, I'LL DO FINE NEXT FULL MOON.

IT'S NICE OF YOU ALL, REALLY. BUT I CAN HANDLE IT ON MY OWN.

FAITH! FAITH, WAIT.

CHAPTER 10 Nashoba Meeting

THIS ISN'T EASY TO COPE WITH. YOU'RE FOOLING YOURSELF IF YOU THINK OTHERWISE. FIND A WAY TO EXPRESS YOURSELF. YOU'RE A FINE ARTS MAJOR, RIGHT? DRAW YOUR EXPERIENCES, YOUR WOLF SELF. SHOW IT TO OTHERS, SHARE. IT'S EASIER IF YOU TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT IT, EVEN IN A DETACHED WAY.

...FINE. BUT ONLY BECAUSE I KNEW YOU BEFORE ALL OF THIS WEIRDNESS.

THAT, AND YOUR ADVICE HAS BEEN GOOD BEFORE.

DRAWING? SOUNDS KIND OF SKETCHY TO ME.

THIS IS ALL NICELY DONE.. BUT I THINK YOU SHOULD STICK TO STILL LIVES..



-- THINGS YOU CAN SEE AND TOUCH! NOT THESE SILLY FANTASY WOLVES.



THAT'S WHAT REAL ARTISTS DO.



WHAT DOES SHE KNOW ABOUT FANTASY WOLVES? MAYBE I'LL GET BETTER RESPONSES ON MY ONLINE GALLERY...

